

ANOTHER SCHOOL IS POSSIBLE (BBOM): A CASE OF PARENT CO-OP SCHOOL
AS A CLAIM ON ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL ASSEMBLAGES

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ABSTRACT

ANOTHER SCHOOL IS POSSIBLE (BBOM): A CASE OF PARENT CO-OP SCHOOL AS A CLAIM ON ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL ASSEMBLAGES

Miray Şahin

This thesis aims to explore the institutionalization of alternative education in contemporary Turkey through the construction of different educational assemblages based on the educational model developed by Another School is Possible Association (BBOM). Based on 14 interviews with educational professionals and parents who experienced this institutionalization process from the very beginning, this study aims to provide a holistic picture of diverse concerns and experiences of BBOM stakeholders. To reveal the socio-cultural and political factors behind the development of such different educational assemblages, I analyse the educational policies and discourses of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) in contemporary Turkey. Although education in neoliberal times might seem to provide a wide range of possibilities which are adapted to competitive educational purposes, lately emerging educational alternatives demonstrate how a particular group of parents avoid performing typical parental preferences under the present conditions of the Turkish educational system. Therefore, the study documents how their perceptions on education, their subjectivities, and their relations with the collective efforts developed with other parents result in constructing such educational alternatives. Findings point out insightful reflections on the challenges of implementing BBOM's alternative education model mainly due to financial resources and the dichotomy of parents' academic worries versus alternative education. The findings particularly reveal the indications of isolated and exclusive class closure built through parent co-op initiatives.

Keywords: alternative education, parent co-op school, parental involvement, new middle class, political subjectivity, Turkish educational system, Turkey.

ÖZET

TÜRKİYE’DE ALTERNATİF EĞİTİM:

ALTERNATİF EĞİTİM TOPLULUKLARINI BAŞKA BİR OKUL MÜMKÜN KOOPERATİF OKULLARI VE EBEVEYN TECRÜBELERİ ÜZERİNDEN ANLAMAK

Miray Şahin

Bu tez, Başka Bir Okul Mümkün Derneği tarafından geliştirilen alternatif eğitim anlayışına dayalı olarak ebeveyn kooperatifi olarak kurulan alternatif eğitim okullarının Türkiye’de kurumsallaşmasını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada, dernek bileşenleri ile İstanbul ve Ankara’da BBOM kooperatif okulları ebeveynleriyle yapılan 14 mülakatı temel alarak; kooperatif okulların kurulma ve işleyiş aşamalarını ele alıp, bu okullaşma modelini tercih eden ebeveynlerin motivasyonlarının ardındaki sosyo-kültürel ve ideolojik unsurlara odaklanıyorum. BBOM ebeveynlerinin sınıflaşmış kimliklerinin okullaşma süreci ve pratiklerine olan etkisi ele alınırken, eğitim modelinin ve alternatif okulların hayata geçirildiği dönemin etki eden unsurlarını göz önüne alarak, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi’nin Türk eğitim sisteminde yarattığı dönüşümü ele alıyorum. Bulgular, BBOM eğitim modelini uygulama zorluklarında kısıtlı mali kaynaklar ile ebeveynlerin akademik kaygıları ve alternatif eğitim ikileme işaret ederken, ebeveyn kooperatif inisiyatiflerinin okullaşma sürecinde inşa edilen sınıfsal olarak izole ve kendine münhasır yapıyı ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: alternatif eğitim, ebeveyn kooperatif okullaşması, ebeveyn katılımı, yeni orta sınıf, politik öznellik, Türk eğitim sistemi, Türkiye.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MoNE	Ministry of National Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Başka Bir Okul Mümkün – hereafter ‘BBOM’ – Association consists of a group of parents, activists, and pedagogues who have deep concerns over the Turkish educational system. The association aimed to develop an alternative to the current system which they perceived to be heavily hierarchical and nonparticipant. Education model of the association was originated from the principles including democratic school governance, freedom of expression, ecological stance, scientific education, unique financial resources, and sense of community¹. Motivation behind such an initiative was the current government policies on transformation of the educational system in recent years.

Whilst alternative approaches to mainstream education is older than a century all over the world, alternative educational initiatives in Turkey are considerably new. Although Village institutes (1940-1953), characterized by democratic participation, positive scientific views against traditional Islamic views, and student-centered learning, are seen as the early examples of alternative school model, they are not seen as truly alternative schools by some critics since they were operated by state and aimed to spread the state values. On the other hand, the monolithic political and legal structure of education has prevented alternative schools to emerge in Turkey except for a few Montessori preschools in the early 2000s.

Alternative schools have been of interest to the parents in the world who seek alternatives to variety of problems brought by mainstream schooling. Lacking a precise meaning, alternative education points out different approaches to teaching and learning based on flexible and innovative ways of schooling (Sliwka, 2008) and the common feature of all alternative education models is that they are not administered, controlled or predominantly funded

¹ For further information please see: <http://www.baskabirokulmumkun.org/model/>

through state-sanctioned programs (Kraftl, 2013: 2). Although the term alternative education covers all educational activities including home schooling, special programs for gifted children, and charter schools, this paper focuses on the BBOM education model serving for the principles of democratic school governance, alternative education, ecological stance, and free financial resources.

With the globalization of capitalist conditions of privatization of public services, education took its share and turned into a market area. Practices such as school grades, degrees, and shaping the educational content according to the needs of the business world turn students into consumers of education (Apple and Beane, 2011). Additionally, Freire uses banking concept in education and argues that teachers chooses and applies their choices and students adapt to it so that the students passively receive the information. Decisions are always made about students while they have no power (Freire, 2016). Thus, alternative approaches have been developed to challenge to this understanding of education. Alternative approaches to learning based on freedom-based learning, spiritual development, and social development away from traditional patterns and strict rules have placed themselves in a separate point from the dominant understanding of education (Miller, 2006a).

1.1. Background of the Study

Critical pedagogical studies advocated the great importance of education in terms of providing social change and transformation in societies. They believe that educational institutions and schools can become spaces for social change (Rysakova, 2014). One example of this is the "Public Administration" and "Citizens' School" practices in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The Labor Party, which won the city municipal elections, provided funds to schools to spend their own budget as part of their Participating Budget policies and authorized all stakeholders

of the school to use this fund through the school councils mechanism (Apple, 2017). With the democratization of some public schools in America, there are educators, administrators, and families who are struggling to empower the children of the oppressed class families, such as the poor and minorities (Apple and Beane, 2011). These schools are characterized by total equality between teachers, students, administrators, and parents, prioritizing democratic and pedagogical goals, and reliance on collaborative project works. In that sense, alternative educators seeking to build free schools or non-school societies aim to eliminate the teacher and student hierarchy. The current problematic of school and education is maintained by the patterns that do not support children's free and independent thinking, self-knowledge and questioning their environment. Therefore, alternative educators advocate that students exposed to education surrounded by ideological patterns should learn about democratic lifestyle, be independent from the control of public education (Miller, 2006b).

While the international debate on alternative education continued, the BBOM Association was founded in Turkey in 2010 with the aim of developing and implementing an original alternative schooling model. This initiative is not an example of any alternative education model available across the world since it built its own alternative school model characterized by prominent concerns over the conditions and needs of its time. Therefore, the alternative schooling model of the association is no doubt important in attempt of creating new norms in Turkish education system. Although there were many private schools that promoted themselves as alternative schools even before the association was established, the BBOM described itself as an educational movement completely new and resistant. The main point that distinguishes this initiative from other alternative schools is that the association itself does not open schools but rather inspires parent cooperatives. Thus, owner of the schools is not a single person or an institution but all parents. While there is no constraint by the

association on operation of the schools, the provenance of the association makes a key difference to understand the starting point of this movement.

1.1.2. Historical Development of the Association and Co-op Schools

With the contribution of the founder of the association and a group of other academicians, the first steps towards establishing the association were taken with a call text published in 2009. With the first meeting of about 40 people, parents who were curious about this model also came together for the first time. Later, the BBOM Association was established in 2010 to open a school in Istanbul. For the next few years, with the formation of the education curriculum committee, academicians, teachers and volunteers from other professions came together to work on the educational ideology and main operating mechanisms of the BBOM association schools. After the founder of the association settled in Bodrum, the first school was opened in Bodrum and the school there actually served as a pilot school.

The most critical issue in the Association meetings, where the education model was determined was the following: to build this system around a foundation and to have a centralized administrative power to manage the schools. The counter argument was having the parents form cooperative schools and manage them themselves. This problematic issue resulted in autonomous cooperative schools which were established and run by parents independent of the Association.

The founders declared their four main principles as democratic school governance, alternative education, ecological stance, and free financial resources in response to the current educational arena which has been under the hegemonic rule of the Justice and Development Party since 2002. Most significantly, the BBOM Association itself does not open schools but supports parents and volunteers who want to open schools in their local regions. While development and dissemination of the model is performed by the association, operation of the

schools is managed by parents. In that sense, the local parents who want to implement this model of education establish their parent co-op schools in their own regions and continue to manage collectively.

Although it is the introductory meetings of the Association's administrators and volunteers that brought these parents together, in fact, BBOM schools operate in a highly decentralized structure. The most important and striking feature of Another School is Possible movement is that different schools in different regions progress in a highly decentralized structure, even though the BBOM's alternative education model is shaped by common values. We see that cities and schools are not interrelated due to the decentralized structure. For example, due to the location and management system of the school in İzmir, ecological stance is quite dominant and a group of volunteer parents run the school. Therefore, other parents trust and hand over the management of the school to a group of people and the principle of peaceful and participatory communities, which the association dreamt of since the very beginning, loses its power at this point.

There are four schools implementing the BBOM's alternative model in Turkey, located in İstanbul (2016), Ankara (2015), İzmir (2015) and Eskişehir (2017)². While the school in İstanbul only provides education at the pre-school level, the schools in Ankara and Eskişehir provide education at the primary school level. On the other hand, BBOM İzmir Cooperative has both pre-school and primary school levels. They opened their first school named Renkli Orman Early Education Center in October 2015 and then Renkli Orman Primary School started operating in the 2017-2018 academic year. On the other hand, Mutlu Keçi Primary School, which was established in Bodrum in 2013 as the first BBOM school was closed after 4 years due to financial problems.

² .2.or further information please see: <http://www.baskabirokulmumkun.org/okullar/>

1.2.Statement of the Problem

Preliminary research illustrates that there are immediate positive effects of alternative education models on students' learning process. Several effects include the advantages of flexible curriculum, smaller class size, and more comfortable learning environment. (Caroleo, 2014; Carpenter-Aeby & Aeby, 2012; Morrisette, 2011; Slaten et al., 2015; Zolkoski et al., 2015). They argue that a flexible curriculum modifies and reproduces itself in pursuit of meeting the needs of students, the smaller class size enables students and teachers to have one-to-one communication more often, and a more relaxing environment is constructed through closer contact of educators and students within a more flexible context. Additionally, Leone and Drakeford approach the issue with regards to sense of community and level of autonomy which take place in alternative education schools thanks to teachers' encouragement of students to pursue their own interests (Leone & Drakeford, 1999: 87).

As part of the neoliberal economic program of JDP, several structural changes in the educational arena has been made since 2002 in Turkey. Turkish education system has been affected deeply by neoliberal policies under the Rule of JDP. It is argued that JDP strayed into neoliberal populism rather than welfare state politics (Bedirhanoğlu, 2010; Yıldırım, 2010; Ertuğrul, 2010). The declining share of investment in the public education budget (İnal and Akkaymak, 2012, 21), increasing demand for private schools and tutoring institutions, increasing focus on vocational education in line with the logic of industrial production and market competition (Bulut, 2012, 73) are the outcomes of transformation of the educational politics. All these processes served to commodification of education and knowledge in Turkey and this study assumes that educational policies of JDP in the shade of neoliberalism made a visible and deep impact on foundation of the BBOM association as a solution.

While alternative education is mostly considered as diverse understanding of educational contents and methods contributing to learning process of children as to pedagogical advancement, this study attempts to explore other dimensions of this alternative model. In order to do this, I focused on the experiences of the BBOM parents by paying close attention to their role as non-public actors in schooling process of their children. My main purpose is to reveal how new educational assemblages emerge as a result of parents' initiative and under what conditions their motivations are shaped. This study observes the BBOM parents' perception of education, and their unmet expectations and ideals about the educational institutions and conjuncture in Turkey. This study also attempts to understand their unique experiences in these alternative educational settings.

The bilateral and rather contradictory situation of the BBOM parent co-op schools are worthy of a close scrutiny. One issue is the resources parents need to have access to these schools. It is stated that there are defects in the education system in considering public education opportunities and conditions offered by the state, there is a need for a democratic, egalitarian, qualified education against the present situation which is economically and socially discriminative³. Thus, are these schools able to meet this ideal and do they go beyond being a private school due to the functioning of the schools and the parents' own power and role as school operators? Another issue is that these parents do not defend market rationality and are not profit-oriented. They do not send their children to private schools that increasingly become trend in the present situation of Turkish national education system, and they do not prefer public schools either. They set up a non-profit order and work collectively by avoiding asymmetrical relations within the framework of cooperation. Although neoliberalism is defined as the drive towards depoliticization of the social realm through its economization (Madra and Adaman 2014: 20), I think that BBOM parent co-op schools still take the

³ For further information please see: <http://www.baskabirokulmumkun.net/about-us/>

advantage of not being profit-oriented and thus they are standing in quite uncertain and unique position, which makes this study worthwhile.

This study aims to investigate the collaboration and the main motivations of the BBOM parents who put certain social and cultural values to center of their alternative educational assemblages. This investigation can inform us about how these parent co-op schools operate in the context of Turkey, how such an alternative education model takes place in practice, the main motivations and difficulties sustaining that kind of microsystem in the mainstream education system, and how non-state and volunteer actors of this alternative publicity deal with the challenges. Thus, the main purpose of the study is not to reveal a pedagogical knowledge or to examine the education model itself in detail, but to examine the people and their sociocultural motivations that made this microsystem appear in a certain context and time period.

This study aims to contribute to alternative schooling literature in the context of Turkey by exploring how different claims in alternative education appears and works in practice in terms of bringing people together with specific goals and motivations while creating alternative publicity as non-state actors. Besides, the study can also provide data for the people who think about and want to adopt the similar models and also give feedback to the association and the parents to be investigated.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: EDUCATIONAL POLITICS OF THE JDP - NEOLIBERALISM AND CONSERVATISM COEXISTENCE

This chapter aims to shed light on the education policies of Turkey under the ruling Justice and Development Party (*JDP*). *JDP* period starting from 2002 has led to many transformations in education both structurally and ideologically. As İnal (2009, 37) puts it, *JDP* rebuilds education on the basis of a capitalist globalization ideology -neoliberalism- in general, and on the basis of a localist identity -conservatism- in particular. Therefore, money (capital) and religion (identity) are used as symbolic indicators in the reconstruction of education.

To elucidate the form and content education is taking today, it is essential to look at the major transformations during two phases under the current government: the first phase between 2002 and 2011 is overwhelmingly characterized by the neoliberal policies; the second phase of the last seven years is shaped more by religious and conservative policies (Durakbaşı & Karapehlivan, 2018) . It was during this period that parents' concerns about education increased and consequently they came together to find a way out by creating new educational settings.

In doing so, I divide this chapter into two sections: marketization of education and conservative content of education. In the first section, I focus on some legal regulations on commercialization of Turkish education system through various amendments in different education levels to reflect the *JDP*'s general attitude towards education in its totality. Second section focuses on how ideological standpoint of the *JDP* rule was performed in the content of the education system and how education policies were shaped consequently.

2.1. A Brief Overview of National Context: Neoliberalism and Education

The last 20 years of capitalism are defined as neoliberalism (Dumenil & Levy, 2007, 25), which is based on the market economy. Neoliberalism serves to legitimize questionable practices and outcomes: deregulation, downsizing, increasing centralization of economic and political power, and widening class polarization (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2001, 137) and neoliberal practices in education shape the curriculum and the content of education to produce self-interested and market-oriented human beings (Akkaymak, 2010).

Although education in neoliberal era is emphasized by its role in promoting knowledge that contributes to producing students who are productive (Hursh, 2000) and responding to the demands of economic growth (Gökçe, 2000; Hursh, 2005), main focus in this section is to briefly explain how structural changes in education widely lead to monetisation of education under JDP's vision.

In Turkey, new economic policies that were introduced towards the end of the 1970s coincided with a restructuring process associated with the 1980 military coup. The 1980 military coup is considered as the beginning of the neoliberal era in Turkey's history. The imposition of neoliberal policies was achieved through structural adjustment programs (SAP) implemented by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Accordingly, countries in need of resources in order to get rid of the debt crisis had the SAPs consisting of liberal policies, which cover a series of interrelated arrangements such as the liberalization of the circulation of goods and capital, the privatization of public services, and the reduction of state social

expenditure⁴. In this process, international organisations such as International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the OECD have played important roles on collapse of public education (Gök ,1995, 2002). In considering public budget, the MoNE's share of the general budget fell from 12.9 percent in 1960, to 1.5 percent in 1980, and to 8.6 percent 1985 (Yolcu 2007, 100). Fittingly then, from 1990s onwards, private actors in education such as for-profit private schools and tutorial colleges (*dershane*) started to rise. Passive privatization policies rapidly led to different forms of privatization such as reducing state support from the financing of public education, using of this support in favor of private schools, and demanding financial contributions from parents for the purchases of educational materials (Gök, 2004; Keskin, 2003; Keskin & Demirci, 2003). Since JDP's mentality of education aims to extend the market's domain, the above-mentioned configurations increasingly brought about the ongoing market mechanisms under JDP rule.

2.2. Economic Front of Education Policies under the JDP Rule

The outcomes of market-oriented education policies of JDP has increasingly been a topic of debate among recent scholarships (Akkaymak 2012; Altınyelken, Çayır & Ağırdağ, 2015; Birler, 2012; İnal 2009, 2012; Kurul, 2012; Özmen, 2012; Ural, 2012). The recent interest is mostly due to JDP's agenda of opening space for commercialization in education which resulted in that education as an institution has gone away from public responsibility. Different vantage points from impact of JDP vision on implementation process of curricula and textbooks of primary and secondary schools (Özmen, 2012) to increase in number of particular profession-oriented foundation universities for needs of the market (Birler, 2012) have been discussed to understand neoliberalism in reshaping education policies.

⁴ Yolcu, H. (2010). Neo-Liberalizm ve Eğitim Politikası. *Bilim ve Gelecek Dergisi*, 71, 45-51.

2.2.1. Disappearing State

The first impact of marketization of education in Turkey was narrowing public provision through declining share of investment in the public education budget. Although JDP has always claimed that the investment in education has increased since 2002, share of investment in education has continuously decreased while the budget allocated to education under JDP governments has increased five times from 2002 to 2011 (İnal 2012, 22). As Figure 1 portrays, the share of investment in the MoNE's budget was 17.18 percent in 2002, then it decreased to 4.57 percent in 2009. Then, the budget ratio allocated to educational investments, which had been partially increased by the implementation of 4+4+4, started to decrease again after 2014. As of 2018, the MoNE's share of investment budget is only 8.36 percent.

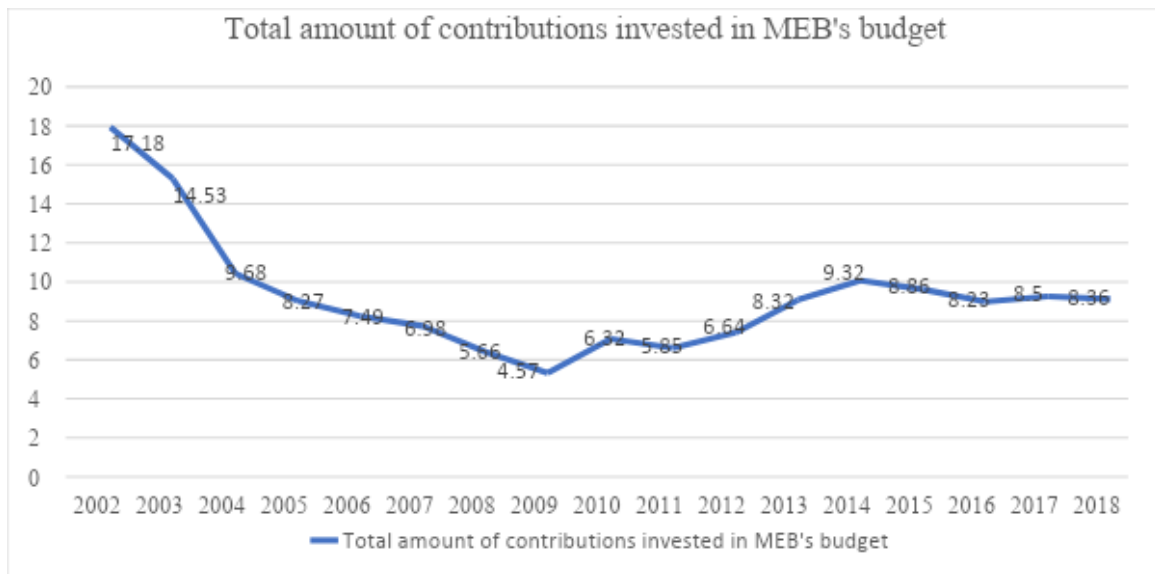


Figure 1: *Total Amount of Contributions Invested in MoNE's Budget*
Source: Eğitim-Sen, 2018

On a global scale, Turkey has one of the largest shares of private expenditure on primary through tertiary educational institutions among OECD countries and partner economies with 24.4 % and ranking ninth in 36 countries. (OECD, 2017). While government expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP on primary, secondary and post-secondary

non-tertiary education from initial source of funds is relatively low with 2.4 % ranking 26th among 28 countries (OECD, 2017). ⁵ In the following, I will present changes in education expenditures of households in JDP period through which the state was able to make its decreasing provision invisible more.

2.2.2. Household Expenditure

In addition to gradually decreasing government's share in educational funding, amount of spending on education by households is another important reflection of decrease in quality of public education (İnal 2012, 22). While the decrease in the budget allocated to education is the main indicator of this, role of households' spending on education has gained more importance whether they prefer private or public schools. In this regard, the main focus on this section is to show while the state should be the main actor in education, its visibility is gradually diminishing in the shade of households as non-public actors.

A study about the first five years of JDP in considering the distribution of education spending by financial resources argues that the share of households' budget for education began to gradually rise. While it was 31 percent in 2001, it increased to 33 percent in 2002, and then it reached to 39 percent in 2006. (Eğitim-Sen, 2007).

The trendy notion that households should spend more for schooling process of their children was gradually extended during the 2010s as Figure 2 portrays.

⁵ <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=TUR&treshold=10&topic=EO>

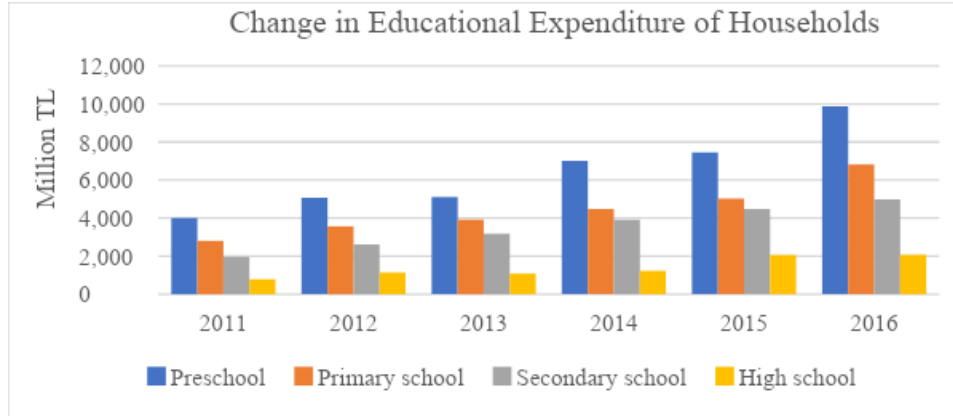


Figure 2: *Change in Educational Expenditure of Households at Different Levels*
Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, Education Expenditure Statistics, 2016

Although the majority of education expenditure is financed by the state, which of 84 percent consisting compulsory need of personnel expenses (Eğitim-Sen, 2019), the participation rate of households in education costs has increased significantly between 2013 and 2017. Additionally, Life Satisfaction Survey conducted by Turkey Statistical Institute (TUIK) in 2018 show that 44.2 percent of participants whose children go to public school and 60.4 percent of parents whose children go to private school see education costs as one of the main problems in Turkish education system. Both rates increased compared to the previous year. In 2017, these rates were 34.8 percent for public schools and 42.8 percent for private schools (ERG Report, 2019). That means, choosing a public school does not prevent households from financial problems and education is increasingly commodified in both private and public schools.

In considering preschool level, the report by ERG and AÇEV (2013) highlights that household expenditure on preschool level corresponds to almost 40 percent of government expenditure since the public resources allocated to this level corresponds to 0.1% of GDP while the OECD countries devote 0.4% of their GDP to preschool education services. The

lack of sufficient efforts by the state in preschool education consequently directs financially capable households to the private sector.

2.2.3. Increasing Privatization

Another major outcome of neoliberal policies under JDP rule is large increase in the number of private schools. Although the way to commercialize education was introduced before JDP years, it gained great momentum during JDP era. (Buyruk 2015, 152). The ratio of private schools to total number of schools has reached 25 percent in 2019, while it was only 2 percent in 2003 (MoNE, 2018). According to Administrative Activity Report of MoNE published in 2018, the number of students in private preschool education institutions increased by 53 percent to 236.355, the number of students in private primary schools increased by 40 percent to 233.740, the number of students in private secondary schools increased by 96 percent to 321.779 and the number of students in private high schools increased by 305 percent to 559.838 as of 2018. While the ratio of students enrolled in private schools to the total number of students was 1 percent in 2002, it has increased by 8 times over the past 17 years and reached 8.2 percent. (MoNE, 2018).

In recent years, the most significant factor in increasing number of private schools and the number of students attending private schools was the implementation of 4+4+4 system as of 2012, which is based on incentive arrangements developed to support the private education sector financially. Through this system, while 612.000 students continued their education in private schools in 2012, this number exceeded the 1 million thresholds in 2015. The closure of tutorial colleges (*dershane*) and converting them into private schools was the main reason for this increase in private schools for the high school level. More importantly, while the existence of *dershane* had already prevented Turkish society from realizing that efficient education should have always been under public responsibility (Gök, 2015), the private

schooling process of these colleges reinforced this neoliberal understanding within this period.

2.3. Ideological Motives of the JDP's Education Vision

Conservative Islamic ideology of JDP has a key role in transforming the education during 2000s and 2010s. Efforts at increasing religious overtones in education is used as a weapon against the modern-secular education understanding in Turkey. Educational practices stemming not from actual needs but from ideological bases have created an increasing fragmentation in education (Yılmaz, 2016) and this attitude gained great momentum in 2010s.

As İnal (2012) argues that changing the primary and secondary school structure to a 4+4+4 system resulted in abolition of laws restricting religious education and thus the party integrated its conservative religious ideology into the system. In considering increase in religious overtones in curriculum, for example, "Citizenship and Agriculture", one of the elective courses of 6th and 8th grades, was removed from the curriculum in 2012 and replaced with three religious-based courses: "The Holy Quran", "Hz. Muhammad's Life" and "Basic Religious Knowledge". Although it has been said that these courses will be elective in theory, some students had to register to at least one of these courses because there was no other non-religious elective course options (Gürcan, 2015). Additionally, lifting the ban on headscarves in the fifth grade in 2014 is another outcome indicating the gaining religious properties of the education system (Karapehlivan, 2019). Yılmaz (2016) also argues that despite the decision by the European Court of Human Rights to remove the course of Religious Culture and Ethics from compulsory courses both in 2007 and 2014, this decision was violated and then a recommendation was made regarding the compulsory religious education starting from the first grade.

On the other hand, Imam-Hatip Schools (IHS) has gained more importance and place with JDP mainly as of 2012, with the implementation of 4+4+4 system. While IHSs were founded as vocational schools in the period of establishment of modern Turkey in 1923 in concern with cultivation of enlightened prayer leaders and preachers (Coşkun & Şentürk, 2012: 166), it turned to be the political limelight in national education system including the scrapping of the lower secondary school system for IHSs and the introduction of an eight-year mandatory schooling system (Kandiyoti & Emanet, 2017).

The 4 + 4 + 4 system brought about three key units in educational structure, namely four years of primary (grade 1-4), four years of lower secondary (grade 5-8), and four years of high-school education (grade 9-12). One important insight here is as Kandiyoti & Emanet (2017: 874) puts it that eight years of compulsory primary schooling in practice were divided into three levels: four years of primary school, four years of lower secondary imam hatip schools, and four years of lower secondary schools. Consequently, changing school starting age for compulsory education from 7 to 5, which was later revised due to protests, and the introduction of religious education with elective courses while converting secular schools into imam hatip schools became the most disputable point behind this policy. Additionally, general high schools have also been transformed into vocational and technical high schools, many of which are in fact IHSs and parents who seek a secular education sometimes being forced into preferring religious schools for their children (Lüküslü, 2016, 643).

The state's transformation projects in education have not only changed the circumstances within which religious motives gained power in the content of different levels of Turkish education; it has also started to change the language that can be used in public sphere while addressing socio-political issues to reach large masses. As in his many speeches, the then prime minister Erdoğan introduced the idea of raising new religious generations as of preschool level of education to constitute a yerli (homegrown) ve milli (national) conception

of the Turkish nation. JDP's vision of education uses this sphere as a battleground both financially and ideologically and this situation reveals the state's failure to comply with its obligation to protect and fulfill the right to education. Under these circumstances, BBOM reflects the concerns of the parents and all stakeholders in terms of having an educational content and an understanding of schooling based on secular, participatory and universal values.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter investigates the issue of parental involvement in the schooling process both in the world and Turkey, cultural class approach in education and the concepts of political subjectivity and responsibility shift paradigm under the neoliberal rule.

3.1. Parental Involvement in Schooling

In considering parental factors on schooling process, some scholars concentrated on familial sources and intents upon providing principles of academic success, future career aspirations, and social mobility against doing what is best for children. While middle-class parenting has been transforming into highly strategic and anxious job (Gopnik, 2006), high awareness of the importance of parental involvement for students' success mainly points out the power of intergenerational closure (Savage 2015, Lareau 2002, 2011; Ball, 2003, Kahlenberg, 2001). Also, middle-class style of living and learning is portrayed positively aligned to the cognitive and cultural structures of the educational system. Thus, families are more willing to make investment in education since it is key to future economic success (Ball et al. 2001; Ball 2003, Reay, 2008). Rutz and Balkan's research (2009) in Turkey indicates how quality education is associated with economically and socially advantaged social groups and how these groups greedily pursue their parental roles in the competitive education market. Studies are predominantly directed towards parental sources and desires in education which serves particular socio-economic groups' reproduction by ensuring educational advantage for their children.

Recent scholarship on the relation between parents and schooling process of children approached this topic by looking for answers for the questions such as how high parental

engagement positively impacts school achievement of children (Smit et al., 2007; Olsen 2010; Pinantoan, 2013), how parents with high socio-economic status provide better learning environment (Carvalho et al. 2016; Su et al. 2015), how parents' educational background shape academic skills of children (Lee & Boween 2006, Lareau 2011), and how home-based involvement results in good study habits of children (Pomeranz, Moorman, and Litwack, 2007).

Most research adopted Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital to the field of parental involvement, defining this as micro-interactional processes whereby individuals strategic use of knowledge, skills, and competence comes into contact with institutionalized standards of evaluation' (Lareau & Weininger, 2003, 569) and the unequal cultural and socioeconomic factors which contribute to transmit privileged social position (Lareau, 2000, 2003; Crozier et al., 2011). However, contrary to settled values in neoliberal understanding of education regarding efficiency and competition, the BBOM schools shape their education vision by emphasizing the importance they attach to ecology, freedom, democratic governance, and anti-discrimination rather than aiming at success, exam system, academic future or profession. Thus, above mentioned studies remain insufficient for understanding the dynamics and effects of non-public actors' involvement in various situations in new neoliberal educational assemblages while the BBOM's educational conjuncture distinguishes itself from competitive and achievement-obsessed educational content and aspiration. It should be noted that the BBOM schools and education vision of these parents cannot necessarily be placed outside the neoliberal framework. It is rather part of an ongoing process in which new rationales and identities are recomposed (Larner, 2000: 16).

In considering the possibilities of different educational assemblages and motives to emerge, Ball's (2013) study asserted that the ways in which neoliberal norms are transformed with education have implications for constructing new ways to make sense of education and for

subject positions are realized. Another study also argued that the notion of education in neoliberal times might encourage conditions for political subjectivity, through which prevailing conditions are interrupted and questioned (Biesta et al. 2014).

Parental involvement includes supporting children, attending inside and outside activities with them, cooperating with the school, watching their children and spending time with them, and putting the subjects they learn at school into practice (Kılıç, 2010). Although a number of studies have been conducted on different aspects of the parent-school relationship in Turkey (Aslanargun, 2007; Balkar 2009; Erdoğan & Demirkasımoğlu, 2010; İpek, 2011; Keçeli-Kaysılı, 2008; Özbaş & Badavan, 2009), they either take into account the contribution of high socioeconomic status and high level of education on parental involvement in children's education or the effects of strong family-school partnerships on academic success of children.

One strong argument that has emerged from the existing literature is that parents' demographics (e.g., parents' education level, socioeconomic status, etc.) may be influential on all aspects of schooling processes and involvement. Yet, to fully understand these parent co-op schools requires a different framework because of two main reasons. Firstly, they are founded and operated with collective capital that is not operated for the purpose of profit in spite of their being private schools. This operation style as the first and only one in Turkey is run by all stakeholders. Secondly, the parents activate their resources to build a collective non-profit struggle in the education sector, which has been increasingly shaped by neoliberal trends. While these vantage points give no place to possibility of different concerns and motivations of parent initiatives, this study aims to explore whether and how self-actualization of parents and their desire to create an alternative publicity through schooling process of their children play a role in creating new norms in education.

3.2. Class and Subjectivity in Education in Neoliberal Times

This section aims to shed light on the theoretical framework for the BBOM parents in considering their classed identities. While establishing a particular common mindset towards schooling by highlighting certain sociocultural practices and values in these educational settings, these people who meet on the common ground under the BBOM Association and parent co-op schools might give us some clues about their classed identities. Here, I borrow Bourdieusian approach to social class which is not based primarily on economic labor market criteria to portray social groups that might have similar identities. types of activities within the school environment, values that parents prefer to highlight or ignore in the content of education tend to reinforce and reveal their characteristics both culturally and ideologically.

I provide a brief discussion on the issue of the responsibility shift paradigm in neoliberal times to understand the bilateral but rather contradictory situation taking place in this education model through parent co-op schools. In this regard, the remarkable point is that whether this collective initiative, which looks at major social problems in large scale and tries to establish a peaceful and pluralistic understanding of schooling without any distinction, went beyond being a private school. The discussion will be held in more detail in the last chapter by exploring the narratives and experiences of the participants.

3.3. Cultural Studies of Class: New Middle Class

Particularly after the 1980s, class as a category has no longer been adequate to understand society. Many scholars claimed the death of class and class analyses seem to have lost their former strength (Hazır, 2014: 231). In recent years, however, the class debate has been

revitalized. ‘Closer investigation of interests and identities’ (Crompton & Scott, 2000: 5) gained importance as a need for a broader understanding of contemporary patterns of class. Class, then, is considered as individualized identities through people’s engagement with social and cultural practices (Devine & Savage 2005; Lawler, 2005; Reay, 1998; Savage, 2000). This new cultural paradigm thus represents a shift from occupation to culture, lifestyle, and consumption; a shift from ‘class’ to ‘classification’.

Cultural class approach complements the macro perspectives that dominate our understanding of the class affair and calls for research that emphasizes how the class is experienced (Reay, 1998: 272). This approach focuses on the classed nature of certain social and cultural practices; seeks to understand the systematicness of such internalized practices that appear in everyday lives of people. Therefore, the emphasis in cultural class analysis is not on whether class consciousness is constructed or not, but on the classed nature of certain social and cultural practices (Le Grand 2008, as cited in Hazır, 2014: 234). In this regard, the cultural class approach paves a way for exploring internal logic and motivations behind the implementation of parent co-op schools since it focuses not only the content of education, but also provides the basis for daily practices of the parents working in co-op schools and allows them to reproduce their sociocultural identity with all the practices they apply through these alternative public spheres. Parents’ strategic use of this sphere enables them to protect their classed identities and to transform it to their children.

Consistent with the international literature, the literature on new middle-class or social segments pointed by the concept of new middle-class in Turkey addresses consumption habits and cultural differentiation of a segment (Ahıska & Yenal 2006; Kozanoğlu, 2001; Şimşek, 2005). New middle-class with its prominent consumer identity acts with the motives of ‘being different’ and ‘distinctive’ in everyday life practices such as eating and drinking, dressing, interior decoration and neighborhood preference in urban lifestyle (Kozanoğlu, 1993: 56). It

should be noted that the term new middle-class in this study is used to delineate a social segment. Instead of defining the class or conceptualizing the middle class, I focus on how new middle class (NMC) parents define themselves and how this definition and identification corresponds to their involvement in schooling process of their children. Thus, the common point derives from these studies is the fact that this segment consciously gets rid of settled approaches or habits adopted by the majority and continues their individualized lifestyles that are closely related to their distinct preferences. Keyder defines this segment as ‘worldly-wise’ and ‘sophisticated’ people who are aware of the world and owe their status to being educated. They are in a certain position in the community because of their educational background and experiences. In that sense, their expectations in sociological terms are quite different; they desire to spend their lives ‘in other ways’ (Keyder, 2013: 1). Following this, NMC parents’ sense of belonging in terms of protecting their class boundaries result in approaching identity as something produced between persons and within social relations (Lawler, 2008: 32).

Schools differ in their assumptions about education and thus restructure a child’s disposition towards education in line with its particular values and habitus (Reay 1998; Reay, David & Ball 2005; Meo 2006). A school’s habitus is a system of transposable dispositions (Bourdieu, 1977: 82), and the product of social and cultural interactions. To further explain this, Bourdieu used the term cultural capital to describe different tastes and habits of specific social classes which outlines how these characteristics reinforce power relationships between those who possess desirable cultural attributes and the institutions that reinforce them (Bourdieu, 1986; 1977). Adopting this perspective, the process of restructuring Turkish education vision and practices at these schools carries certain social and cultural power relations as main instruments that are immediately translated into the operation style of the schools. In doing so, the common educational trajectory offered to all schools in Turkey is retranslated depending

on particular values under strong supervision of anxious and responsible parents of the BBOM schools.

3.4. Political Subjectivity

As previously mentioned, the situation for parents behind the process of choosing this unique education model should not be understood independently from their individual concern and collective action by taking advantage of transforming co-op schools as the space of manoeuvre. In that sense, the terms ‘political agency’ and ‘political subjectivity’ help approach people of collective initiatives not as the mere choosers of alternative models, but political agencies who struggle to create and maintain some space by challenging the current circumstances.

O’Brien (2015) argues that the concept of political agency has been traditionally limited within the framework of officially recognized agents such as political parties, unions, governments, or individual leaders who have authority to act on behalf of others. However, such a narrow conceptualization of political agency does not develop any analytical thinking to understand collective action or transformation that might take place in public sphere, nor does it encourage the emergence of political alternatives. With the aim of participating in society effectively as active, critical and responsible citizens (Crick 2007, 245), political subjectivity is constituted by three dimensions which are (1) there is something wrong in the present situation, (2) there are alternatives to this situation and (3) I or we can make difference (Martinsson and Reimers, 2017, 131).

In a similar fashion, Kallio and Häkli (2017) argue that political subjectivity points out the ability of human beings to act in an unexpected way with the intent of challenging, opposing, negotiating, and readjusting dominant values through real life experiences. In their discussion

of the emergence of political subjectivity in schooling process, Martinsson and Reimers (2017) assert that plurality is a prerequisite for schooling and education to embody a multitude of interconnections through political subjectivity. However, plurality here is not based on a commonality of interest, but instead based on an interdependent we. Similar to this discussion, just because the motivation for meeting on common ground to question dominant values of the present climate does not guarantee that the coexistence of the BBOM parents unquestionably performs plurality in these schools. I think that the main reason for sustainability, where collective capital and parental involvement in all aspects of schooling is the source of determining the needs, might be commonality of interest, in one way or another. With these key aspects of political agency and political subjectivity in relation to education in mind, I think that this understanding of schooling and initiative is intertwined with the effort of parents to live in harmony with themselves and their socio-cultural identities, which are opposed to the current educational climate in the Turkish education system.

3.5. Responsibility Shift Paradigm

It is argued that neoliberal policies liberate markets from state regulations and thus the best allocation of investments and resources are produced through self-regulation (Brenner & Theodore, 2002: 5). Neoliberalism constructs social and political environments that encourage market rationality (Harvey, 2005: 42), and it implies the application of market logic to other fields (Jensen & Prieur, 2015: 5). As Harvey points out by following Marxist viewpoint on neoliberalism, it is a “political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites” (Harvey, 2005: 19). Thus, a shift in governmentality emerges and neoliberalism gives way to new forms of relations and individual initiative or responsibility (Brenner and Theodore, 2002: 26).

Responsibilization is a governance praxis which operates through attributing opportunity and independence to people while at the same time increasingly requires individual responsibility and self-reliance. (Barry, Osborne & Rose 1996; Barnett et al. 2008; Shamir s2008, as cited in Pyysiäinen et al., 2017: 216). It is argued that the state indirectly establishes neoliberal form of subjectivity (Rose 1992; Peters 2001; McNay 2009) whereby individuals look for solutions and take actions for their problems or concerns. (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde, 2006: 89). Although it is widely assumed that the state becomes smaller and less active, the neoliberal state is often quite active (Hall, Massey, and Rustin 2013; Dean 2014). According to Wacquant, the state 'actively generates the subjectivities, social relations and collective representations in pursuit of market rationality' (Wacquant, 2012: 68). In this manner, the subjects of neoliberal governance are persuaded by the appeal of increased personal freedom and opportunities for self-realization. (Pyysiäinen et al., 2017: 216-217). To the extent that the individualized subject of choice perceives itself as free, the visibility of the workings of government is able to be significantly reduced (Foucault, 1977: 193, as cited in Davis and Bansel, 2007: 251). While public services under the neoliberal rule are inevitably reconstituted, education thus appears as a commodity which is not offered and protected by the government.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, research questions, study design, the participants' characteristics, data analysis, timeline, and the limitations of the study are presented.

4.1. Research Questions

This study aims to explore the characteristics of the alternative education model that takes place at the BBOM parent co-op schools and the main motivations, experiences and perceptions of the parents while being both parents and stakeholders of the schools. The study includes in-depth interviews with 2 people from the association, and 12 parents from the schools both in İstanbul and Ankara. While former participants helped me gain insights about the institutionalization process of the schools and the education model itself, the latter participants enabled me to gain insights about parents' vision of education, their personal experiences in schools, and the relation with other parents with whom they are cooperating. To this end, the research questions I asked to the participants from the association were determined as:

- When and how did the association form and what were the main aims of establishing the association and developing this education model?
- What happened when the association was concerned with the state mechanisms during the implementation of such a different model?
- What were the differences of this model compared to the education given in other schools and how successful was it?
- What do you think about the Turkish education system?
- Which segments of the society were expected to reach?
- How would you describe the people meeting under the same roof by pursuing parent co-op schools through this alternative education model?

The questions I asked to the parents are:

- When did you know about the association and how did you decide to choose this school?
- What were the most important reasons for choosing this school?
- Apart from your role as a parent, how did you feel as an individual and a non-public actor while being a part of this initiative?
- What are the good and bad outcomes of being in this school on your experience?
- What do you think about the Turkish education system?
- How would you describe the people meeting under the same roof by pursuing this model and cooperative schooling?

4.2. Study Design

This study is designed as an illustrative qualitative single case study. The underlying epistemological philosophy of this study is interpretive approach. In this approach, it is assumed that the reality is socially constructed and there is no single observable reality. Whilst there are multiple realities of a single event, researcher is viewed as constructor of knowledge who aims to describe, understand, and interpret the phenomena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As stated by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016), case studies deeply investigate individuals, environment, events, and states. While there are different types of case studies such as illustrative, exploratory, cumulative and critical instance case studies, the illustrative case studies aim to inform the audience about a phenomenon that was unknown before. Therefore, the illustrative case study makes unfamiliar familiar (Hayes et al., 2015). While the overall purpose of qualitative research is to understand how people perceive experiences, the researcher becomes the primary instrument of the process of data collection.

4.3. Participants

The participants of the study consist of the association members ($N=2$) and the parents ($N=12$). An outline of demographic characteristics of 2 association members and 12 parents can be seen at the table below:

Table 1
Participant Characteristics

Participant Pseudonym	Gender	Educational Background	Occupation
Association Member	Female	BA	Self-employed
Association Member	Male	PhD	Self-employed
Parent One	Female	BA	Self-employed
Parent Two	Female	BA	Not working
Parent Three	Male	BA	Self-employed
Parent Four	Male	PhD	Academician
Parent Five	Male	BA	Self-employed
Parent Six	Female	BA	Self-employed
Parent Seven	Male	Master	Business Owner
Parent Eight	Male	BA	Self-employed
Parent Nine	Female	PhD	Academician
Parent Ten	Male	BA	Self-employed
Parent Eleven	Female	Master	Not working
Parent Twelve	Female	BA	Small Business Owner

Note 1: For confidentiality purposes, participant names have been replaced by pseudonyms.

Note 2: Self-employment includes academician, architect, lawyer, doctor, pharmacist, engineer, financial advisor, designer, etc.

4.4. Interviews

For this study, I conducted semi-structured interviews both with the association members and parents. I received much help from the association and parents in both schools and the parent interviewees were sampled using the snowball technique, which served to gain access to participants and build trust. After I successfully attained trust and rapport with my informants by informing them about the research conditions with the informed consent form, I conducted my interviews mainly by asking open-ended questions to make parents to talk as comprehensively and flexibly as possible about their personal views and experiences. All the interviews were done outside the schools and were scheduled according to the participants' free time. They lasted from 60 to 90 minutes.

4.5. Data Analysis

Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016) describes two important types of analyses for qualitative research: descriptive analysis and content analysis. Descriptive analysis answers the question “what” and describes the respondents' views and content analysis enables us to explain “why” and “how” and includes the interpretation of the researcher. In this research, I used content analysis in order to answer the research questions and be able to conceptualize the findings.

While there are two types of content analysis methods, inductive coding method was used in this study. It refers to a detailed reading of raw data to determine some themes through interpretations derived from the raw data by the researcher. On the other hand, deductive data analysis tests whether data are consistent with prior assumptions or theory identified by the researcher. In this study, inductive analysis allowed me to explore significant themes and to create meanings emerging from the raw data without any limited power of predetermined structures (Thomas, 2006).

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

In this chapter, based on my semi-structured in-depth interviews with 2 people from the BBOM Association and 12 parents involved in BBOM parent co-op schools in various ways, I reveal how the process of institutionalization takes place under inconvenient circumstances of Turkish national educational system, how the BBOM parents think and feel about their distinctive parental experiences, how the process of parental involvement affects their relation to their identity, and their perspective on child-rearing.

Attitudes towards alternative education are a two-way street: how alternative education is perceived by the association itself and how it influences the attitudes of parents who experience this process directly as executives of the co-op schools. This chapter, which reveals the points at which the association and the parents sometimes contradict each other, focuses mainly on the experiences of parents both as parents who prefer these schools and non-public actors who manage and take responsibility for the management of alternative schooling model. In addition, although the alternative education model put forward by the association has certain basic axes, the BBOM parent co-op schools are more or less different in terms of the educational content since the schools established in different cities are managed by different parent cooperatives who have children of different ages. This perspective will expand our knowledge on how BBOM parents' experiences differ from each other, depending on the place and the age group.

In order to have longer interview sessions, I offered all of my interlocutors to have the interviews outside of the schools. All of them accepted to have the interview outside of the schools and permitted me to record during their interviews. I also assured all of my interlocutors about anonymity and confidentiality of the research. Hence, I do not use the real names or any identifying information of the participants in the thesis.

The following section introduces the goal and place of the association within the alternative education conjuncture. Firstly, I was mainly interested in how the people took part in the establishment process of the association in introducing the alternative education model experience from the very beginning in an environment where education is frequently ideologized in public debates and policies. Then, I pay specific attention to the experiences and feelings of parents coming together through this alternative education model and schooling process. I was mainly interested in how they experience parental involvement both as parents and shareholders of the schools.

5.1. The BBOM Association as a Claim on an Alternative Education

Lacking a precise meaning, alternative education points out different approaches to teaching and learning based on flexible and innovative ways of schooling (Sliwka, 2008). Since there has been a broad range of alternative forms of education rooted in different philosophies, the landscape of alternative education is highly fragmented depending on what type of time, geography, cultural and political conjuncture people perform it. In this regard, the BBOM movement is not a representative of any alternative education model available across the world since it was shaped by parents, educators, and volunteers according to the conditions and needs of its own era.

When asked about what makes BBOM educational model alternative, different, and unique, the founder of the association started pointing out the fact that why so-called alternative schools outside were not able to provide alternative education:

“Many schools are promoting themselves as if they offer alternative education. However, their priority is to make money and use models that are already well known in the world, like the Montessori or Waldorf model. Thus, they are not different from private schools outside which are operated as business. We dreamt of a non-profit schooling that does not harm social justice. There is nobody making profit by

operating these schools. Donations and all expenses are used under the supervision of parents to improve conditions of schools. Parents are both owners, auditors, and clients of the schools. I think that they feel much safer here.”

In addition to this account, he highlighted the position of BBOM as an important initiative in transforming some things in the educational system.

“BBOM Association is a very important civil movement in education. I think this is the biggest step after the Village Institutes. There is no organic or legal sanction of the association over schools. However, they develop a schooling style based on four axes of this alternative model. In this model, the basic intent of the word alternative is that it is neither a private school that returns to a business nor a school with problems faced in public schools such as lack of resources, strict rules or crowded classes etc. We are shaping our educational tools and goals based on the specific conditions we suffer in Turkish educational system. This is what makes this association unique.”

When asked about the main problems in the Turkish educational system, the participants highlighted the position of the BBOM Association in emphasizing schools as fields of resistance (Rysakova, 2014), giving priority to participatory and democratic culture.

“BBOM schools provide education at preschool and primary school levels and we never focused on stereotyped academic inspirations. Nothing is imposed from above and everyone, primarily students, participates in all these processes and decisions. Children are not active subjects in education. They do not have the right to speak in a totally stereotyped curriculum. There is no opportunity for children to discover and realize their own talents. It is therefore meaningless to expect a child raised in this way to be a democratic citizen.”

Also, the founder of the association indicated his feelings about educational content devoid of climate consciousness and access to qualified education.

“Climate change is affecting our world. This is not something to be taught with stereotypical and only symbolic activities. This has not yet become a remarkable matter not only in the Turkish education system but also in educational conjuncture around the world in general.”

About the most important motivations behind parents in choosing this educational model and schools, the association members responded:

“There are people with multiple and different motivations. Some say just let my child find himself and be happy, others say that this place is very different. The most important and common motivation is to see this place as a place of rebellion and where the problems can be solved all together, and a schooling process where parents who have concerns about their child and education actively involve state of affairs easily. If we come to the public school and private school discussion, they do not see public and private schools outside different from each other. While private schools are profit-oriented places, they think they are also the same with public schools in terms of educational content, and therefore they do not have confidence. They want a secular and democratic education and they do not like rote learning and strict rules.”

“We are talking about collective action of human communities who take strong responsibility to make the initiative happen. They stopped complaining about the things around them and took the road. But this situation has not yet gone beyond an individual or group effort and the BBOM schools could not go beyond its private school position yet. In general, a parent who is mainly concerned about having good living conditions cannot think whether his/her child's school is democratic, ecological, or participant. From the very beginning, it is necessary to have certain and rather above average conditions that one becomes able to think about and tackle this problematic issue in the schooling process of their children. People who prefer these schools are urban, secularists, literate, having at least a bachelor's degree, doing their own job, or have a very good salary scale, and have similar socio-cultural practices. We can say that they are middle and upper-middle class people.”

In this regard, these new educational environments set up by educational activists who center the interests and needs of children are limited to serving the social class that can reach these educational settings although the movement represents a visionary resistance within the current education system in Turkey. At this point, the binary but rather contradictory situation arises when questioning its non-discriminatory structure as the association describes its mission as "a qualified, democratic and egalitarian education for all".⁶

In that sense, the main problem here is that the association and schools position themselves as the spaces for bringing pluralist and democratic education to all although BBOM movement is unable to get rid of strengthening individualism and the discourse of neoliberalism, which brings about the collapse of publicness and collectivism because of its structure depending

⁶ For further review please see: <http://www.baskabirokulmumkun.net/tarihce/>

mostly on economic capital. This is not to deny that the schools have been constructed thanks to valuable efforts of different groups of parents, but the way in which these educational settings are organized and maintained is highly exclusionary and limited. Thus, this movement seems mostly to be a habitat where the middle and upper-middle class people distance themselves by integrating into another kind of private schooling.

On the other hand, the association claims that the main aim in the long run is to spread this intellectual movement by influencing state policy.

“Teachers leaving the current education faculties do not have any tool to apply an alternative model. They learn and practice in accordance with traditional patterns offered to them. With the project "Teacher's Village", we provide some organizations and tools that enhance the vision of teachers to apply this model both in public and private school teachers working outside BBOM schools. We are actually trying to substitute something that the state does not do. On the one hand, this is the duty of civil society in the 21st century. We fill the fields left empty by the state. On the other hand, however, the state leaves more responsibility to individuals as we fill this place.. Minister of MEB, Ziya Selçuk, invited us one week after taking his office and we discussed how the Teacher's Village project of BBOM Association could have spread across Turkey. This development might be a big step on how effective the BBOM movement can be for a possible transition to a new phase in education”.

At this point, the teacher-centered project of BBOM can be seen as a possible strategy to stand against public education problems in terms of facilitating new possibilities by ruling over the already existing order of education and training. It is important to value that there is a dream of including all sections of the society in these schools where multiple norms both counteract and act together with the neoliberal norms.

While the escape of the parents seems mostly an individualistic strategy, Wright (2015) talks about the option of eroding capitalism in microsocial terms: to protect particular niches and to figure out ways of expanding these habitats. That means, the vision of the BBOM movement can also be seen as a tool that punctuates the actually existing Turkish education system which can no longer be said to dominate the system as a whole. To challenge the system and

do it in their own way should not be underestimated thanks to these educational spaces that have been institutionalized and created their own lines. Nevertheless, the phrase "equal and democratic education for all" would be an exaggeration.

İnce (2019) claims that BBOM Association is both outside and inside the system thanks to the applications and education values that constitute its main axes. It includes both capitalist and non-capitalist practices and it is especially important in that it is a democratic and non-profit civil initiative showing that alternative options may exist in education. Likewise, this dual and contradictory situation of the association and schools makes it difficult to ascertain one specific form, such as the neoliberal norm, as the only decisive norm (Martinsson and Reimers, 2017: 8) in this movement. While neoliberalism fails to grasp the pluralistic nature of the social world and the conflicts this entails (Mouffe, 2005: 10), the BBOM movement has a potential to weaken the ideology of education that reproduces capitalism. However, this situation comes along with another contradictory issue.

The point I want to make here is related to the idea of engaging the association and its values with the national education system. Based on the important problems of the Turkish education system, the BBOM's model is a product of social responsibility and civil movement that creates a new habitat. It distances itself from the national education system by providing a more democratic and secular environment that does not serve the purpose of profit making. However, the intervention of spreading this movement might be criticized about whether it remains consistent with its principles. How can the association and parents, who ensure the establishment and maintenance of cooperative schools by challenging certain characteristics of education system, engage with state institutions in spite of maintaining their own culture? Despite their language of openness, this model is associated with particular economic and sociocultural characteristics as can be seen in the way schools and their educational content

are organized. Crucially, this contradictory issue is pointed in the account of the founder as follows:

“Since the JDP government is a great flag carrier of neoliberal capitalism, our private schools were actually involved in this privatization trend in the education system and thus we did not have any bureaucratic problems. With possible collaborations between the association and the government, we can theoretically contribute to reconstruction of teacher training such as taking the lead in promoting new tools to be offered to teachers in education colleges in Turkey. If all socioeconomic groups cannot reach these schools, we wanted to reach them through teachers. Unfortunately, there might be no other way to provide further transformative effects on a large scale under such conditions.”

In his discussion on BBOM Association and its cooperation schools, Yildiz (2015) argues that these kinds of pursuits show up in times of despair. However, this type of private schooling approach adapts to the neoliberal market ideology. It disrupts the idea of social union for democratic education and the purpose of solving the structural problems of the Turkish education system. Therefore, it is far from an awaited hope.

In the next section, based on the interviews with parents, I will show the personal experiences and opinions of parents on BBOM schools to which they are attending.

5.2. Collective consciousness outside the box

Although in one or two cases parents said they had no choice of school because they could not find a school closer to their home, most of the parents in the sample did make a conscious decision to send their children to the parent co-op school. The importance of cooperative cannot be underestimated. Central to their decision is the conciliation between their ideological positions, strong focus on their parental commitment, and their role as political agents. Therefore, these educational settings are a result of the plurality of individual desires

and the construction of a particular majority (Martinsson & Reimers, 2017: 24) to be able to think and act outside the box.

Even before pointing out the schools' educational vision, almost all parents mentioned their active role-taking in searching for diverse possibilities offered to all students within school environment. Parents' desire to exhibit every competence they have for the good of the community of which they are members was quite prevalent in their narratives. As one mother said, when asked about why she chose BBOM preschool in Moda:

“... most importantly, the strong sense of solidarity through which all of us took active roles is what made this place unique and attractive to us. When there is a need even for a closet at the school, we think about how we can meet this need by ourselves, rather than saying "Let's pay some money, so they can handle it." If anyone understands carpentry, s/he attempts to solve the issue and other parents come and help. As a former advertiser, I understand better that I was not that happy during the years I have worked to encourage consumption. Likewise, children learn to create and find solutions to any problem all together.”

Their sense of pooling their knowledge and resources for the good of the community emerged as a strategy to transcend their immediate environment and to shape the courses their unique community take (Bandura, 2006: 164). Another mother, when asked about the leading motivation for being a part of the BBOM school in İstanbul, clarified her feelings by indicating strong priority to create political subjectivity together with the notions of self-realization and self-sufficiency skills of the children.

“... valuable efforts to do some things useful by acting together, each and every person here makes me feel very good as an individual. We are not the people who only complain and criticize some things, but we try to transform things with our own power. This school contributed to my sense of fulfilment and self-realization a lot. Likewise, we would like to ensure some habits for our children in terms of meeting their own needs and being self-sufficient. I think people here do not aim to attribute any future status or profession to their child. I want my child to live whatever he wants to be in the future and how he wants to live.”

There are also examples of strong desires for education and outspoken ambition to let children become political subjects by using their right to speak, to act differently, and to imagine other possibilities (Martinsson, 2017). One father, who has joined Moda cooperative from the very beginning, explained this with reference to the Gezi Park Protests which emerged as a political realm that formed a plural, un-hierarchical and auto-organized power (Özdemir, 2015).

“We started out from our own life experiences and traumas. The education system has always been terrible, and we had no power to create any alternative. Establishment of Moda Cooperative took place in 2013 and obviously it is no coincidence. After the Gezi Park Movement, we all believed that some things do happen when we get together. Actually, we fell in love for the feeling of being organized and each person came here had been influenced by Gezi. Likewise, we want to raise children who can raise their voice and think freely. For instance, they meet in the garden every morning and evening and talk about their thoughts, feelings, or discomfort on any topic they want. They see that they have an authority and can exercise their right to speak without any pressure. This is very precious to us.”

Paying particular attention to being organized, self-sufficient and critical thinkers, these educational settings seemingly emerge as places for new norms and practices in education while both parents and children recognize the political nature of the school environment which provide new modes of engagement for reclaiming the connection between education and democracy. In doing so, they operate collectively to ensure a critical mass response to some individual concerns and anxieties. More importantly, having referred to their feelings of being invisible, inaudible, or marginalized in the context of the Turkish education system, this close-knit community receives its power to operate and maintain the schools from this common feeling of recognition.

Overall, therefore, the engagement with parent co-op operation at BBOM schools transforms these particular educational settings, most importantly in that they have the potential to engender strategic use of educational settings as an alternative public space. Parents share

their desires for children while they mostly refer to their own life experiences and concerns, which gave rise to the emergence of alternative publicity in education.

5.3. The power of new middle class style of values

Parents frequently reported that they felt close to the moral agenda with a strong emphasis on the type of adult they would like their children to grow up to be. More than one-half of the parents highlighted their desire to fashion identities for their children as citizens of the multicultural twenty-first century. As one mother from Ankara said, when asked about the gains of the school:

“I have no other expectation than my child getting ready for life by learning freedom of thought, rational thinking, and democratic approach. When she will have to go to a school operated by the state, she may face an authoritative and close-minded environment and she should be able to handle it. I wish to raise a child with universal values. When she will meet different people, who have not grown in the same conditions or not adopted the same values just like her, she should not find them strange.”

One father from Ankara justified their choice by referring to their economic power:

“... earlier, I sent my child to the most prestigious and rooted private primary school in Ankara for one year. There were none of the values adopted here. There was a set of values including competition, child-rearing stereotypes, academic pressure, and teacher-student hierarchy. We still have the economic power to send our child to that school, but thankfully we are here.”

As indicated in the majority of parents’ accounts, the notions of gender equality and environmental consciousness were highly prominent. One mother summarized:

“My 4-year-old child is learning gender equality and environmental consciousness here and talking to me about these issues. When I look at children of the same age group going to any other school outside, I don't see this. My child's ecological education at our school results in her saying, "You are consuming a lot of paper towel mom". This is not something that can be measured with any academic success or grade. I could not find it anywhere else. I am right where I belong.”

In that sense, both state and private schools outside seemingly did not provide new middle-class style of values such as powerful desire for individual autonomy, rationality, secularism, environmental concerns, and globalism (Ayata, 2002: 40).

Despite above mentioned positive experiences and sense of satisfaction gained from this collective movement, in one case, one mother from Ankara mentioned how anxious she was about the future of her child in terms of achieving success and self-confidence under the standard and competitive examination testing measures of the state-run schools. She expressed her concerns about her choice and the path they followed regarding her child's education:

“My child will finish fourth grade this year and will have a hard time next year when he will go to a school outside this system. Rather than children, parents became the main subjects of this movement way too much. As we considered our own traumas, social and political concerns about the Turkish education system and governance, we ignored the children and their possible fear of failure in future. We got so caught up in some of our own values and when my child cannot succeed at the things expected in any exam, he becomes unsatisfied and tetchy. I have the economic power to provide additional academic support for my child when he needs it. What will happen to those who are not able to provide?”

The point here is that this parent's child started BBOM primary school at Ankara at the exact time when the school was founded. Parents of the preschool children in İstanbul or of the early years of primary school in Ankara never made such an academic emphasis. Therefore, it seems important to consider the possibility that certain acceptable parameters in the education system may be controversial or disappointing for other parents in the near future. Consequently, this may cause them to be included in the present system of highly competitive education market and examinations in one way or another. This possibility may call for alternative points to be considered in the future about the contradictory position of BBOM schools and parents.

The same parent also mentioned not all BBOM parents are economically comfortable and have the same means. She does have concerns about the process of whether and when parents will be uncomfortable with the BBOM system, which was deemed to inevitable. This situation makes the idealist approach of BBOM parents ambivalent: On the one hand, some parents said that they would send their children to any nearby state school to stand by their ideals and thus there would be no way to be a part of the highly commercialized and competitive current system. On the other hand, in spite of the desire for their children to experience life and diversity with the vision of the association, some parents were often circumspect about their need for a more sterilized environment in which their children could be more prioritized. Importantly, they indicated this need by addressing their long-standing sense of being excluded and invisible citizens of Turkey. These are not merely based on a single principle of their child's academic achievement and happiness but are contingent upon their complex but rather classed desires combining the material, cultural, emotional, and spatial contestations. In that sense, the critical importance of affect in constructing class difference (Reay, 2005: 913) and psychic landscape of social class (Reay, 2005: 911) emerge at the BBOM schools while schools are the repositories of all kinds of fears, hopes and desires held by particular social groups (Shaw, 1995).

The vast majority of parents both from Ankara and İstanbul also highlighted their insecure and vulnerable feelings about the way through which the essential components of education are shaped and managed in Turkey. In most cases, parents expressed their disquiet about nonsecular characteristics of education in Turkey, regardless of whether it is a public or private school.

“The current government wants to create masses who are obedient and are not capable of questioning. They use education well as to have the folks they want to manage, and to indoctrinate with their conservative ideology even starting with preschool. Conservative discourses very visibly increased in the public sphere and in

the content of education as well. As an educator, I am fully aware that this is terrible and don't want my child to grow up in an environment shaped by this culture."

When they were asked about how BBOM schools would overcome these specific issues:

"There are many things in the curriculum offered by MEB to all private and public schools that do not fit in with our values, particularly excessive use of religious and national concepts. We do not impose anything on children. For example, when the subject is twenty-third of April, the topics such as the definition of sovereignty, meaning of republican administration, or the gains of the republican administration are highlighted. Equipping the school with flags or memorizing marches is not in line with our values. Our suggestion is to present such content within the framework of general culture. Thus, the aim is not to highlight any notion and to guide students accordingly. There is no such orientation at BBOM schools."

In that sense, the process of recontextualizing secular education content is directly related to parents' attempts to reconcile their ideological position over the schooling process of their children. Since all parents identified both themselves and other parents as secular, how knowledge forms are selected and distributed amongst students is embedded within particular supervision and rules of parents. What I have discerned, then, is a combination of parents' motivation for choice of and commitment to the comprehensive school environment based on right to speak and participatory culture. Therefore, I approach parent co-op schools as the space of maneuver at the individual level that is affected by the education sector in which individuals are embedded, and the surrounding education structure, i.e. cultural, political and economic context (Sum and Jessop, 2013).

5.4. Subjective causes of the exclusivity: "It was not our fault..."

Although BBOM defines its alternative educational mission as to offer 'qualified, democratic and egalitarian education for all', all participants complained about the lack of social state when asked about the reason for founding and maintaining their exclusive school structure.

Since neoliberal policies have been increasingly embraced in the Turkish education system, privatization and increases in parental contributions transformed education in neoliberal trend (Gök, 2007). The JDP government aims to increase the share of private schools in the education sector (Aydoğan, 2008) which is accompanied by declining public resources and lower quality education at public schools (Tansel & Bircan, 2006). Following accounts are illustrative of the position BBOM parents take as to the criticisms directed towards the schools' exclusive structure:

“... we experienced many debt-crippled times. Nothing is easy here. Not everyone has access to our school, yes, but we are not the main reason for this problem. I wish there were a social state offering this education vision and schooling process to each and every citizen. Unfortunately, the reason why not everyone can access this school is a problem beyond us.”

As a reaction to increasingly commercialized and unsatisfactory education vision both in private and state schools, BBOM parents created a social initiative movement by cooperative schooling, through which the private schools are governed and charged by parents' association. While BBOM's institutional route played an important role in the creation and consolidation of this exclusive schooling, nearly all the parents expressed a degree of anticipation and despair. They made similar and highly defensive remarks in their expression of emotions about deficits in state educational provision when asked about necessary conditions for admission to schools.

“There are private schools that are a little cheaper than ours, and there are much more expensive ones. It's true that our school is not accessible to everyone. However, the problem lies deeper in our education system. For example, what we are trying to implement here is called alternative education while this education vision or educational practice in Finland, for instance, has already been built as a public education model. It is the whole thing we all suffer from. I'm here because I have no faith that things will get better. Having said that, I think that the association's efforts working with the state to spread the model is very ironic. Is it really possible for us to

take joint action with the minister of national education who already has his own private school chains in Turkey?⁷

As can be seen from this account, most of the parents were skeptical and even opposed to the ongoing relation between the association and ministry of education. The biggest reason they tend to ignore this partnership is that they do not believe in functioning of the ministry of education independently of market-oriented, conservative, and unequal ideology of the current government while their parent co-op schools offer something different outside the current order.

One parent as one of the founders of Ankara cooperative said:

“... this model had to be opened as a private school. Actually, we did not think that such money would come out of our pocket. We benefited from some institutions and companies that we reached with our own means. While there is a legal limit on the number of scholarship students at all private schools, we are above the limit and still trying to reach more students. We do this within our own means, but our goal is to somehow influence state policy and to make this model more common and accessible to all.”

Those who choose the project-based grants in pursuit of finding financial support in Ankara became more or less dependent on support from donors. They also faced the conundrum of how to balance ideals against social privilege and tactical imperatives for the cooperative school's advancement. As it turns out, they typically reached the companies and institutions using their own social networks and occupational positions. This is consistent with the literature that argues resources of cultural, social, and economic capital help to alleviate feelings of risk, fear, and despair (Reay et al., 2005).

⁷ Maya School was founded in 2002 by the Minister of National Education, Ziya Selçuk. It is a private school chain that offers education at different levels of pre-school, primary and high school located in different cities in Turkey.

Despite above mentioned idealist desires of both the association and parents to make these schools more accessible and widespread across Turkey, a minority of parents also talked about their security needs. A mother from Ankara indicated:

“Public school was not even among our options. We did not want to commend our child to that mentality. Our increased discomfort and insecurity against the policies of the JDP caused this. Some of the founding parents of this school are our close friends. We acted quickly and got involved because we trusted them. Indeed, I don't want our school to be heard and known too much while we are a close-knit and safe community.”

In that sense, some parents were more prone to protect their community and educational vacuum as concisely as possible.

5.5. Comfortable place: people like us

Lastly, cooperative locality operates as an integrative mechanism when it comes to identity formation. This is consistent with the literature that suggests that class is embedded within people's everyday life although it is not directly referenced to daily discourse. Even though some parents did not prefer to identify themselves with a class, they unintentionally manifested it by describing other parents as ‘people like us’ which is a way of differentiating themselves in relation to others (Reay, 1998: 269). As one mother put it:

“... we are here with a group of like-minded people. We have a lot in common, especially in terms of having more or less the same worldview. All the people here are very educated, intellectual, and open-minded. We trust each other and feel safe here. My sense of belonging to this group of people has been reducing my concerns about life and the country.”

When asked about the profile of parents, they usually referred to educational level and cultural background. Although parents said they were not homogeneous in terms of economic power and life standards, what made the school environment their comfort zone was about

parents' certain level of intellectual capacity and worldview. As Bourdieu (1977, 1986) argues that cultural capital pertains to knowledge of the normative codes inscribed in a culture which is used by individuals or groups as a means of either promoting relative social advantage or as a generalized currency which can be exchanged for other social or economic assets. In that sense, cultural capital and common worldview of BBOM parents refer to the ways of perceiving, thinking, and behaving that characterize the members of parent co-op schools whilst schools are considered as sites promoting particular forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The practices that the BBOM schools perform, and the views shared by parents give us intergenerational closure, which refers to meaningful social relationships existing between children and their friends' parents (Fletcher et al., 2001). While a student's cultural capital that is passed down through the family is mostly contextualized related with access to academic rewards gained by the social class position that the family holds (Dumais, 2001; Lehmann, 2007; Swartz, 2008), education is perceived as easily accessed sites by those who represent and maintain privileged norms (Swartz, 2008). However, in the case of BBOM parent co-op schools, cultural capital of families brings about parents' engagement with the schooling process of their children in pursuit of creating differing norms in an educational setting.

On the one hand, as noted above, the majority of parents said their long-term plan is to reach more people from all social groups and to make way for some structural changes in transforming Turkish education, despite the fact that some parents find it contradictory and wrong. On the other hand, as Whitty (2001) emphasizes the exclusion strategy of middle-class parents from general types of educational locations of state provision that deem to be unsafe in ideologic or social terms, BBOM movement similarly manifests itself by enjoying large autonomy in setting their own conditions.

At the heart of this ambivalence lies the question of the aim of the BBOM movement in creating a culture of resistance and transformation. Being emotionally and physically part of

this community creates a sense of security, but it brings with its limitations which may preclude other social groups in particular institutions without the benefits of the presence of coexistence through diversity. While some of the participants supported the association's idealist goals and increasing relations with the state, the majority of parents found this relationship contradictory and useless. What is emerging, therefore, is the tension and discrepancy between the association and parents.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the discussion of the main themes of the study. After displaying practical and theoretical implications of the study, the recommendations for future research will be presented.

6.1. BBOM's Alternative Model

While alternative education points out different approaches to teaching and learning based on flexible and innovative ways of schooling (Sliwka, 2008), the BBOM education model distinguishes itself from other alternative education models because of its parent co-op initiative which results in collective capital and governance that aim to contribute to the common good. All expenses and financial processes go hand in hand under the transparent and shared management without profitability.

Additionally, while the public school or private school is not different from each other for the parents, the majority of the interviewees stated that they did not even see the option of being a part of any public school. The main reason for this was that they saw public schools as places away from secular education, serving completely ideological stereotypes, where their children's psychology would be negatively affected. Almost all parents expressed their idea that the current government imposes a way of life that is far from democratic values not only in the field of education but in all areas of life. They did not believe that there was a way to get rid of this, and they stated that they had to produce something themselves because they thought the education system would never improve.

At this point, the findings revealed that the alternative education model developed by the association turned into a space to escape from all educational institutions and perspectives, both public and private schools. While almost all of the parents said that they would not find the qualifications they have in these schools in any school outside, they criticized not only

public schools but also profit-oriented private schools that are not far from the understanding of education in public schools. They argued that even though their own schools function as private schools, this difference is evident in all the procedures they determine and apply.

The discourse of parents also revealed that sustainability of the alternative educational model of the BBOM schools requires the teachers to be equipped with alternative values. Although the association and some parents want this model to be widespread throughout the country and to be the standard education model offered by the state, they think that the teacher training system and universities are not managed and shaped by this vision. On the other hand, some parents opposed this arguing that this education model and schooling structure is only possible with a kind of boutique schooling model and it is very contradictory to cooperate with the government whose policies and ideologies seem quite different compared to this model. Thus, it is inevitable for these schools to remain exclusive and appeal to a certain segment of society both financially and culturally. At this point, educational practices and motivations at the BBOM schools have never been neutral while the parents consolidate their ability to generate the formation of a particular model through which both parents and children become the exclusive participants. While this example of NMC parents' attempt in creating particular educational assemblages raises all sorts of paradoxical questions, their power and place in this microsystem unfold the class relations in the field of education.

A result of this emphasis is that social, economic and cultural factors embrace the use of education with the aim of shaping intellect, emotions, habits, and so forth. Even to build a construct of autonomy following liberal conceptions of the aims of education point out the fact that it is less the result of educational processes and more the result of social conditions. Developing a critical approach to creation of new sites is necessary to recognize how already existing neoliberal policies serve commodification in education and how even non-profit collective initiatives developed and maintained by distinctive social and economic factors put

particular groups of people into a frame of greater levels of exclusive class closure for their needs.

As the study revealed, this form of strategically targeted educational movement represents a critical conjuncture. It reflected both the limitations of a different kind of private schooling that was resolved through neoliberal ideology and a more proactive form of parental involvement. It resulted as a social initiative in schooling as an incitement to a participatory and democratic understanding of education for both students and parents. Conceptualizing as such this movement can be a crucial step to leave behind crumbling monuments to the purported failure of public institutions (Atasay and Delavan, 2012) and to reimagine alternatives. Analyzing the broadening horizon of neoliberal crisis in education is thus essential for a critical understanding of alternative models, as well as further theorizing of the role that exceptional spaces play in recovering the future of education.

To sum, the BBOM schools directly restructure the form of parental involvement by attaching strong importance to parents in governing and operating these schools. As a transparent and reliable form of management, they seem to rebuild their trust in the schooling process of their children by performing remarkable control over what happens at the schools. To fully understand BBOM parent co-op schools requires a different framework because of two main reasons. Firstly, they are founded and operated with collective capital that is not operated for the purpose of profit in spite of their being private schools. This operation style is the first and only one in Turkey because of the dual status of being the parents and the owners of the schools. Secondly, the parents activate their resources to build a collective non-profit struggle in the education sector, which has been increasingly shaped by neoliberal trends. In this regard, the BBOM parents struggle with prevailing conditions of the Turkish education system by going through institutionalization of distinctive and rather autonomous educational settings.

6.2. Collective consciousness in establishing alternative publicness

My main aim in the thesis is to show the local stories of BBOM parents' alternative education and parental involvement experiences in Turkey. In order to understand the factors that affect parents' motivations and experiences, I analysed the social and political factors that contributed to this process from the very beginning.

I presented some structural changes that took place in the Turkish national education system to show how the economic and ideological approach of the current government disseminated into the national education vision. While ideological and rather conservative motives gave rise to the problem of secular education, here my main purpose is to reveal how political discourses and purposes towards education resulted in such differing educational assemblages which are the result of highly increasing concerns of the BBOM parents. These people heavily expressed their concerns about the nonsecular educational content of the Turkish national education system. At this point, the findings revealed that worries and fears of the parents created by the JDP's conservative education policies became one of the most important factors in the emergence of these education assemblages in order to create a kind of comfort zone both for parents themselves and their children.

While political subjectivity points out the ability of human beings to act in an unexpected way with the intent of challenging, negotiating, and readjusting dominant values through real life experiences (Kallio and Häkli, 2017), the parents struggle with prevailing conditions of Turkish national education system by going through institutionalization of these distinctive and rather autonomous educational settings. More importantly, the situation for parents behind the process of choosing this unique education model should not be understood independently from their individual concern and collective action by taking advantage of transforming co-op

schools as the space of maneuver. In that sense, the terms ‘political agency’ and ‘political subjectivity’ help approach these people not as the mere choosers of alternative models, but political agencies who struggle to create and to maintain some alternative space by challenging the current circumstances.

Similar to this discussion, just because the motivation for meeting on common ground to question dominant values of the current education system does not guarantee that the coexistence of the BBOM parents unquestionably performs plurality in these schools. I think that the main reason for sustainability, where collective capital and parental involvement in all aspects of schooling is the source of determining the needs, might be commonality of interest in one way or another.

With the key aspects of political agency and political subjectivity in relation to education, I think that this understanding of schooling and initiative is intertwined with the effort of parents to live in harmony with themselves and their socio-cultural identities, which are partly opposed to the present situation of the Turkish education system. With the motives of being different and distinct, BBOM parents desire the parent co-op schools to comply with their classed identities, specifically focusing on the dissemination of some particular values including self-governance, independence, participation, and intellectual profundity. However, relying on the Bourdieusian cultural class analysis as a means of analysis to comprehend the forms of inequality (Reay, 2005, 2011; Savage, 2013; Bottero, 2004; Skeggs, 2004; Atkinson, 2009), education becomes the most crucial component of the NMC as a field of reproduction. Although privatization in education in contemporary Turkey is immense and the BBOM parent co-op schools are part of this privatization, the bilateral position of these educational assemblages makes the issue worth examining. While parents want to protect their children from the current education system, they reproduce their desired everyday life activities through the schooling process of their children in order to maintain their own classed

identities. While they realize and convey their tastes in a wide range from types of workshops that take place at the schools to outdoor activities, they can also benefit from their educational background and occupations in the corporate affairs of the school such as the process of using their own networks while collecting donations for the schools. This highlights the privileged and advantageous nature of this schooling process since the parents with particular occupations or skills constitute the school's different content and education vision.

However, the biggest dilemma of the study emerges with the responsibility shift paradigm that emerged in the neoliberal order. Responsibilization is a governance praxis which operates through attributing opportunity and independence to people while at the same time increasingly requires individual responsibility and self-reliance. In this regard, I evaluated that while BBOM parents complain about the lack of a social state, they fall into the neoliberal individual responsibilization trap that the state indirectly imposes on them. At this point, parents escaping from the state and national education system become a part of the responsibility shift paradigm, thanks to their economic and sociocultural power, and thus cannot avoid serving neoliberalization in education despite their highly praised non-profit structure. Considering some parents' precious efforts to increase outside opportunities and access to BBOM schools, some were still uncomfortable with the idea of disseminating the model because of their lack of faith in the national education system and general public vision towards education. At this point, all these values and contradictions cause the BBOM association to stay outside the framework it has always idealized.

Majority of the parents strongly expressed the importance they gave to the new middle-class style of values including individual autonomy, rationality, secularism, environmental concerns, and globalism (Ayata, 2002: 40). According to them, the institutional standards of the BBOM parent co-op schools meet their needs in terms of putting forward some identities for their children as citizens of the multicultural twenty-first century. As a result of these

discussions, borrowing Reay's (2005) language, I argued that parents' critical attention to the psychic landscape of social class emerged at these educational assemblages. By proposing ways of praising particular values, parent co-op schools thus become the repositories of desires held by these particular social groups.

Since establishing and maintaining these schools requires a certain economic power and the opportunities to provide scholarships are limited, they were quite reactive about the lack of social state in Turkey. On the other hand, they were also very desperate for any progress to be made by the current government. For these reasons, they were also satisfied with this path they had to go out on their own. While the accounts were quite similar while defending their particular and collective path to escape from mainstream education, only one parent opposed this issue. Although this parent was among the founding team of the co-op school in Ankara, she accused most of the parents of being liberal and not being able to escape being a purely self-serving community. Just like the founder of the association, the frustration of being unable to go beyond being a private school was highly clear in her accounts.

6.3. Subjective Causes of the Exclusivity

The interviews revealed that parents' mutual trust between each other and their comfortable feelings increase as a result of sharing similar socio-cultural values. Although there was a minority of parents both from Ankara and İstanbul insisted on the fact that that cooperatives are not as homogeneous as they are seen, I argue that what made the school environment their comfort zone was about parents' certain level of intellectual capacity and worldview which make easier to meet on a common ground in general.

Alternative schools, which offer distinctive opportunities for the parents and association executives to create a multi-layered identity in terms of finding a solution altogether, have not

been able to escape from their feature of being totally separate and rather unique part that can be formed as an alternative in the Turkish education system, and thus they are inadequate to display the idealistic stance they put forward. The values of social solidarity they have result in a tendency to limit concern only to the self and one's significant others, that is called intensified individualism (Layton, 2010, Nafstad, 2002). Nevertheless, the collective and precious efforts of these anxious people made these differing educational assemblages possible by carrying distinctive motivations in the Turkish education system. BBOM parent co-ops take responsibility for the care of themselves and in doing so make clear that social reality is not as inevitable as it may seem. Thus, it points out a process of struggle that creates the possibility of thinking about educational assemblages differently.

This thesis provided analysis on voluntary responsibility taking of the BBOM parents as non-state actors, their parental involvement experiences over the parent co-op schools, and both political and sociocultural factors involved into the process of institutionalization of such alternative education model in Turkey. While I consider these places as parents' spaces of maneuver and comfort zone, indeed, parents also have increasing concerns about the future in which their children will face the world outside and competitive standardizing education. At this point, parents who are sending their children to a higher level of education that is closer to the examination system, were more anxious than parents in Istanbul. It shows that this type of alternative education and its consequences for different age groups might differ in parents' feelings. Parents who become more anxious for the future can make a highly variable opinion when they first set out with the parent co-op school. This raises questions about whether and how far parents can move away from their idealistic stance with the purpose of being able to struggle with their anxieties for their children in the competition-oriented neoliberal world although they have created a framework far from the problems directly belonging to this macrosystem.

6.4. Limitations of the Study

The significant limitation of the study is its one-sided examination. Although there are 4 schools implementing this education model in Turkey, this study focuses only on parents from İstanbul and Ankara. Thus, this situation inevitably restricts the discussions on general parental experiences and perception among all co-op schools applying this model.

Another limitation of this study was the lack of survey that could have been applied to all BBOM parents both from İstanbul and Ankara. However, because a group of parents kept avoiding the survey by saying that they were not able to help and deliver for such a wide participation, I limited the methodology with my informants' narratives and experiences.

6.5. Implications for Further Research

1. While the cooperatives are completely independent and autonomous from the association in implementing their own school policies, the above-referred idealist approach to spread this education model is another question mark, especially when this is the main purpose of the association. Further research is necessary for making comprehensive analysis to unfold the complexity of the relation between the association and parent co-op schools and more importantly, to explore the reroute of parents who left these schools or whose children graduated from the schools would be very critical in understanding all these contradictory issues. Therefore, inclusion of possible parental strategies they followed after parent co-op schools is suggested for further research.

2. The study reveals that one ultimate aim of the association is to achieve a social and cultural change of a more democratic and egalitarian society. While the association and the schools

internalize these values, they remain within the borders of the BBOM schools. In that sense, future research is necessary to investigate the behaviors and opinions of all stakeholders, from associations that donate to the schools or the association to those who voluntarily support the BBOM model outside although they do not send their children to these schools, at bigger contexts to understand the dilemma of the individual and social transformation.

3. This study has a strong focus on the issue of parental involvement and motivations in establishing the parent co-op schools for alternative publicness in education. However, it lacks any input from teachers' and students' perspectives. Future research is needed to further investigate the perceptions of the other components of the schools to get a holistic approach and to compare their experiences in practice.

4. The results reveal that restricted financial resources of the cooperatives result in challenges in maintaining and enhancing the BBOM model. While the first parent co-op school of the BBOM model was opened in Bodrum, it had to be closed due to financial challenges. This study reveals that the existing schools also struggle financially and also reveals why the number of the schools remains limited in Turkey.

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